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ANNUAL REPORTS OF SCHOOL COMMITTEES.

THE season has arrived, when the annual Reports of the School Committees are made to their respective towns. The law requires that these Reports "shall be read in open town-meeting, in February, March, or April, in each year, or be printed and distributed for the use of the inhabitants."

It is sincerely to be hoped, that, for the present year, more of the towns will order the reports of their school committees to be printed, than did so, the last year. It is impossible, otherwise, to give that circulation to the documents, which their importance demands. To read a report on the condition of the schools, amid the din and bustle of a town-meeting, would be, for a considerable portion of the inhabitants, about as available, as to read it to a brigade of militia, during a sham-fight. Such a variety of topics is always presented at the annual meetings of the towns,—all to be despatched in so brief a period,—that the citizens have neither time, nor are they in a state of mind, to consider so important a subject, as the schools. The thoughts of the voters are otherwise employed. Private, personal interests occupy their minds. Some of them are candidates for office, and are looking with trepidation to the result of a ballot. Some are champions of one candidate, and some, of another; votes are to be prepared and distributed; a great deal is to be said in a short time, in electioneering for one candidate, and striving to defeat another. Some have been on committees, and have reports of their own to make and to defend. Many are interested in some municipal or local question, such as the laying out, or discontinuance of a road, the building of a bridge, the adjustment of a claim, the formation of a contract for the paupers, the appropriation of a fund, or some other personal matter, in which they feel an immediate concern, and which must be attended to, then, or never.

Under these circumstances, what probability is there, that the committee will obtain a full and fair hearing for their report? Their views ought to be considered, weighed, pondered; not pushed aside, nor slurred over. Besides, it is to be feared, that, while one of the committee is reading the report, half the meeting will seize upon the opportunity to transact such private business, as they may have occasion to do. Many people go to town-meeting, not merely to choose officers for the current year, but to meet persons with whom they have had, or wish to have, dealings. Town-meeting day and the town-house are the day and place of 'Exchange,' for the country. They are what the 'Exchange' is to the residents of a city; and, as the day comes but few times in a year, much business is crowded into a brief space. Collectors go there to collect taxes, and the tax payers to pay them. There, debtor and creditor meet to adjust and settle accounts. Some go to find purchasers for goods or crops; others, to find sellers of them. Sometimes, there is an auction going on, near by, where old furniture or old clothes are sold, and a dense circle gathers round, at least to see, if not to buy; or a pedler seeks out the meeting, to find purchasers of his essences or gim-cracks; or a jockey has a horse to sell, and both animals are showing off, on the adjoining common; or one of that nondescript race,—half beggar

and half thief,—comes along, with a barrel-organ, and gathers around him a crowd of boys of all sizes from three to six feet high. Now, in the midst of this Babel of politics and trade, of payments and duns, of electioneering, and, perhaps, auctioneering, peddling, jockeying and show-mongering, the committee must read their report to their impatient townsmen; a report on the most vital of all earthly interests, and equal to the aggregate value of all other interests, because it comprehends all others. Is this a sufficient channel, through which to convey to the mass of the people, an adequate knowledge of a subject in which they, most of all, are interested. Compare this mode with that of printing a sufficient number of copies, for distribution to every family in the town. If any citizen is not present at the reading, or not attentive to it, he probably loses it forever; as few will take the trouble to go, afterwards, and borrow the report for private perusal. But, if it be printed, and a copy left in every house, it remains with them, soliciting attention. If it cannot all be read at one time, it may be taken up again and again, until it is finished. Its very presence will suggest the subjects of it, as topics for conversation in the family. It will be a new stimulus to exertion; a guide to the objects, for which new efforts should be made.

Nor is there any substitute for this mode of diffusing information among the citizens, respecting the condition of the schools. Nothing else can supply its place, or be commensurate with the wants of the community. In making the Abstract for the last year, selections have been made from the Reports of the committees, where copies had been forwarded to the Secretary of State, according to law. Two of these Abstracts are sent to each town; one, to the town-clerk, the other, to the school committee. But not one in five hundred of the citizens will ever see these copies, or, perhaps, even know that such a document exists. The printing and distribution of the reports, therefore, seems to be, not merely the best, but the only way, in which the merits and the defects, the points for advancement and for reform, can be spread before the people, who are so vitally interested in them.

If reports were made at the last March meeting, in any town, it will not be too late to insert an article in the warrant for the next meeting, to see if the town will not order them to be printed and distributed. The cost will be so little, and the benefits so great, that we trust this course will commend itself to all the friends of popular education.

SUMMER SCHOOLS.

Are those females, who propose to be candidates for teaching the *Summer Schools*, doing anything, by reading, conversation, or study, to fit themselves for a proper discharge of the duties they propose to undertake;—or do they think that the skill and the spirit, to perform the most difficult and most important of human labors, are to be miraculously given to them, when they cross the threshold of the schoolhouse door?

[All over the State, efforts are making, to introduce singing into the public schools. Witness the following, which we take from a Northampton paper.—Ed.]

PUBLIC SINGING IN SCHOOLS.—We spent a delightful hour, yesterday, in the Boy's High School, in witnessing Col. Barr's praiseworthy efforts to introduce singing, promiscuously, among the boys. Although but few lessons have been given, the proficiency he has already secured among nearly one hundred and fifty, is sufficient to dispel the skepticism of the most fastidious on this subject. The readiness with which they read the notes on the black-board, give them the proper tones, and then transform them into some simple, but cheerful melody, cannot but gratify the dullest eye and please the

most obtuse ear. The effect it has upon the taste, spirits, and manners, of the boys, is surprising ; while the zest, with which they enter into this part of the exercise, bears witness to its happy influence and elevating effect upon character. We wish parents could be induced to look in upon this excellent school, oftener. It is a duty they owe themselves, their children, and the teachers, to exhibit personal interest, and to encourage both pupil and master, in the performance of relative duties. Northampton should be proud of this excellent school. It is not surpassed by any private seminary in Massachusetts, and it is infinitely ahead of the great majority of the academies in this country.

[From the Connecticut Common School Journal.]

CULTURE OF THE IMAGINATION.

In a late address of the Working Men of London, we were much struck with the following suggestion, as being in advance of public sentiment with us, as to what should come within a course of Common School education. "They,"—i. e. all the children of the nation—"should be taught the principles and practice of music, a gratification and a solace, even in the hut of poverty. Their imagination should be sedulously cultivated, by directing their attention to every thing lovely, grand, or stupendous, around them, as affording a stimulus to greatness of mind, and as powerful antidotes against the grovelling vices so prevalent in society." It is thought by many extravagant, to propose that the faculty of imagination, which is common to all, and which, when cultivated, gives to life its grace and its elevation, and awakens within us a sympathy with whatever is lofty and beautiful in Nature and Art, in the minds and the deeds of men, should be developed in every human being who lives. But we feel that there is a warrant for its culture, in the fact, that it is a constituent part of the universal mind, and that none of the capacities, either for enjoyment or usefulness, given by God, should lie idle. We have no sympathies with those, who would exclude the bulk of society from communion with the greatest and best of our race, through their written thoughts, or from the enjoyment of the glorious sights and sounds, of which Nature is so full, and which no extent of participation can diminish. Such communion, with the illustrious spirits of their own age and of the past, will give all, and especially the largest and poorest class, an elevating sense of what they may become, and impart strength, to struggle against the harsh and contracting realities, about them. But to the vast majority, the harmony, beauty, and sublimity, of Nature, the rich heritage of noble thoughts which Milton, and Shakspeare, and other illustrious names, have bequeathed to mankind, without restriction, is effectually closed, from the want of a due culture of the imagination, in the opening of life. We would not be understood, to recommend the culture of this faculty, at the expense of other faculties of the mind, or to fix an unattainable standard of Common School education.

As one branch of this subject is so eloquently discussed by Mrs. Sigourney, in the following Essay, which was prepared and read, at our request, before the State Common School Convention, in October last, we will not enlarge upon it, at this time.

ON THE PERCEPTION OF THE BEAUTIFUL.

[By Mrs. L. H. Sigourney.]

In most parts of our country, the system of Common School education is exclusively confined to the imparting of necessary knowledge, or the regulating of the palpable points of moral education. The latent emotions and principles receive but a slight share of attention. Still, their due development is highly important ; links, as they are, in the chain which binds social beings to each other, and man to his Maker.

Among those, for which, perhaps, the poorest provision is made, especially

in our primary schools, is the *perception of the beautiful*, both in the works of Nature, and of Art. This might be made an adjunct, in softening the rude, and refining the susceptible. It is valuable, both as a source of individual happiness, and a feature of national character. In ancient Greece, the spirit of beauty and of grace wrapped even her peasantry in its mantle. Hence, she has stood forth, amid the lapse of ages, and even beneath the yoke of oppression, as the teacher and model of mankind.

But, when the young children of this Republic are transferred from the nursery to those buildings, whose structure, imperfect ventilation, and contracted limits, furnish too strong an idea of a prison, the little spirits, which are in love with freedom and the fair face of Nature, learn to connect the rudiments of knowledge with keen associations of task-work, discomfort, and thralldom. Through the whole of their daily durance, are pains taken to show them any thing, of which they can say, "how beautiful!" to exhibit aught, which might kindle the smile of admiration, or refresh the half-wakened and easily-wearied intellect? Still, the teacher, who, like a skillful lapidary, brings forth the hidden vein of beauty, imbedded in the soul, aids in polishing a column, which may hereafter adorn the private abodes, or give stability to the public institutions, of his native land.

I hope the time is coming, when every isolated village schoolhouse shall be as an attic temple, on whose exterior, the occupant may study the principles of symmetry and of grace. Why need the structures, where the young are initiated into those virtues which make life beautiful, be divorced from taste, or devoid of comfort? Why should they not be erected in fine, airy situations, overshadowed with trees, and embellished with shrubbery? Why should not the velvet turf attached to them be bordered with hedges, divided by gravel-walks, tufted with flowers? Why should not the thick mantling vine, decorate the porch, or the woodbine and convolvulus look in at the window, touching the heart of the young learner, with a thought of Him, "whose breath perfumes them, and whose pencil paints?"

Why should not the interior of our schoolhouses aim at somewhat of the taste and elegance of a parlor? Might not the vase of flowers enrich the mantelpiece;—and the walls display, not only well-executed maps, but historical engravings or pictures;—and the book-shelves be crowned with the bust of moralist or sage, orator or Father of his Country? Is it alleged, that the expense, thus incurred, would be thrown away, the beautiful objects defaced, and the fair scenery desecrated? This is not a necessary result. I have been informed by teachers, who had made the greatest advances, towards the appropriate and elegant accommodation of their pupils, that it was not so. They have said, that it was easier to enforce habits of neatness and order, among objects whose taste and value made them worthy of care, than amid that parsimony of apparatus, whose very pitiful meanness operates as a temptation to waste and to destroy.

Let the communities, now so anxious to raise the standard of education, venture the experiment of a more liberal adornment of the dwellings devoted to it. Let them put more faith in that respect for the beautiful, which really exists in the young heart, and requires only to be called forth and nurtured, to become an ally of virtue and a handmaid to religion. Knowledge has a more imposing effect on the young mind, when it stands, like the Apostle with the gifts of healing, at the "beautiful gate of the temple." Memory looks back to it, more joyously, from the distant or desolated tracks of life, for the bright scenery of its early path. Amid our ceaseless tides of emigration, the mother turns, in spirit, from the broad prairie or the dreary wild, to the beautiful schoolhouse, where her childhood was trained; and, while she feeds her babes with the manna which was there gathered, tells them how lovely was the spot, where, morning after morning, she found it among the flowers, "after the dew had gone up, a small, round thing, like the coriander seed, whose taste was as honey."

Yet, where both the external and internal means of embellishment are denied, or sparingly furnished, much may be done, to remedy this deficiency, by the ingenious and philanthropic instructor. He can cultivate the perception of the beautiful, among the works of Nature. This branch of education, it would seem, might recommend itself, even to the utilitarian spirit of the times, from the *cheapness* with which it may be taught. It requires neither expensive books, nor deep scientific research. The means of studying it are revealed, at every footstep, and varied through every season. From the young vernal grass, to the pure fertilizing stream, the tasseled corn, the grain ripening for the sickle, the wing of the bird, which, like living sapphire or ruby, glances through the dark forest,—the teacher may weave a pleasing and profitable lecture for his attentive auditors. How readily may he collect a simple apparatus for his school room; the crystal, the tinted shell, the branching coral, the wild flower which, submitted to the action of a tiny microscope, might fill with a spirit of admiration, not unallied to piety, the brief intervals of study. Thus, the pinion of the butterfly, the armor of the beetle, or the lamp of the glow-worm, may furnish a lesson to the rudest boy, of kindness to the inferior creation, and wondering love of Him, who has clothed it in such mysterious beauty. Such precepts have a peculiarly happy influence, when, mingled with the elements of the masculine character, they soften and refine, at a period of life, when they are often most needed.

Availing himself of the liberality of Nature, the teacher will find great pleasure, in directing the eye of his pupils to a volume, always full and always open. If the works of art are not accessible, he can point them to a picture-gallery, which is never shut, and which the poorest have a right to enter. Where is there another, whose artists are so numerous, so perfect? Every rising and setting sun deposits there such a picture, as the virtuoso in his cabinet, the king in his palace, cannot boast. Thither Spring comes, with showering buds and roses; Summer, with gorgeous landscapes; Autumn, with those mellow tintings, which the pensive beholder loves; even hoary Winter hangs up the tracery of his colder pencil, the snow-clad hillock, and the glassy lake, covered with sportive children. Shall not those, whom we lead by the hand for a little while and profess to educate, be taught to admire this all-pervading spirit of beauty, which

“Glow in the stars, and blossoms in the trees,
Lives through all life, extends through all extent,
Spreads undivided, operates unspent?”

Do any reply, that the perception of the beautiful is but a luxurious sensation, and may be dispensed with, in those systems of education, which this age of *utility* establishes? But is not its culture the more demanded, to throw a healthful leaven into the mass of society, and to serve as some counterpoise for that love of accumulation, which pervades every rank, intrudes into every recess, and spreads even in consecrated places the “tables of the money-changers, and the seats of such as sell doves.”

In ancient times, the appreciation of whatever was beautiful, in the frame of Nature, was accounted salutary, by philosophers and sages. Galen says, “he who has two cakes of bread, let him sell one, and buy some flowers; for bread is food for the body, but *flowers are food for the soul*.”

“I think the pure passion for flowers,” said Mrs. Hemans, when near the close of life, “is the only one, which long sickness leaves, untouched with its chilling influence. Often, during this weary illness of mine, have I looked upon new books with perfect apathy; but, if a friend has sent me a few flowers, my heart has leaped up to their dreamy hues and odors, with a sudden sense of renovated childhood, which seems to me one of the mysteries of our being.”

Nature, studied through her own beauties, not only humanizes and de-

lights, while that study is pursued, but extends an influence to the remoter periods of life. A true love of Nature, acquired in childhood, is like a sun-beam over the clouded parts of existence, and often grows more vivid with the lapse of years.

I have seen it in the chamber of mortal sickness, allaying the pang of anguish, by the magic of a fresh flower laid upon the pillow, by the song of the nesting bird, by the waving of the green branches at the open window ; I have seen it mingling, even with delirium and the fever-dream, soothing images of the cherished garden, the violet-covered bank, the falling waters, or the favorite grove, where childhood had played, or youth wandered.

I have seen it brightening the almost sightless eye of the aged man, from whose side those who began the race of life with him had fallen, one by one. Yet he finished not his journey alone, for he made a living friend of every unfolding plant, of every growing tree, of every new leaf on the trellised vine, that shadowed his Summer seat ; and, in the majestic storm, walking forth at midnight, he heard the voice of that Almighty Father, to whose home he was so near.

"O Unseen Spirit of Creation," says an expressive writer, "watching over all things, the desert and the rock, no less than the fresh water, bounding on, like a hunter on his path, when his heart is in his step, or the valley, girded by the glad woods, and living with the yellow corn ; to me, though sad and baffled, thou hast ministered, as to the happiest of thy children. Thou gavest me a music, sweeter than that of palaces, in the mountain wind ; thou badest the flowers and common grass smile up to me, as children in the face of their father."

If the perception of the beautiful may be made conducive to present improvement, and to future happiness ; if it has a tendency to refine and subliminate the character ; ought it not to receive culture throughout the whole process of education ? It takes root, most naturally and deeply, in the simple and loving heart ; and is, therefore, peculiarly fitted to the early years of life, when, to borrow the language of a German writer, "every sweet sound takes a sweet odor by the hand, and walks in through the open door of the child's heart."

Why has a Being, of perfect wisdom, implanted within us a strong perception of the beautiful, and spread the means of its sustenance, with an unsparing hand, throughout his Universe ? Why, from the depths of ocean, where the pearl sleeps, and the coral effloresces, to the fixed star on its burning throne, in the far, blue vault of heaven, has he shed abroad that beauty which speaks of Him ;—that we should walk, with our eyes shut, through these ever-changing scenes of loveliness and glory ;—or that we should neglect to teach our children, through "the things that are seen," the power and goodness of their invisible, untiring Benefactor ?

"Ah ! how can we renounce the boundless store
Of charms, which Nature to her votary yields ?
The warbling woodland, the resounding shore,
The pomp of groves, and garniture of fields ;
All that the genial ray of morning gilds,
And all that echoes to the song of even ;
All that the mountain's sheltering bosom shields,
And all the dread magnificence of heaven ;
Ah ! how can we renounce, and *hope to be forgiven ?*"

ARTIFICIAL MEMORY.—A humorous comment on systems of artificial memory was made by a waiter at a hotel, where Feinaigle dined after having given his lecture on artificial memory. A few minutes after the professor left the table, the waiter entered, with uplifted hands and eyes, exclaiming,—"Well, I protest, the memory-man has forgotten his umbrella."

[For the Common School Journal.]

SPELLING.

MR. EDITOR,—I believe it to be a common and just complaint, that the pupils of our Common Schools, generally, come far short of acquiring that practical knowledge of orthography, which is desirable, and which it seems reasonable to expect. It is found, that, although they are kept upon this branch, from year to year, even to the end of their school-going days, yet, the best of them come off, at last, but indifferent spellers, while the great mass would so disguise their mother-tongue, in attempting to write it, as to make it almost unintelligible. Even those who spell well, in school, find that they cannot spell, when they undertake to write. That a difficulty like this exists, will not be disputed. The cause, or causes, and the remedy, if there be one, cannot but be an interesting subject of inquiry. Upon this subject, in both its parts, I have views, differing, in some respects, essentially, from those which I recollect to have seen in anything published upon this subject, as well as from those which appear carried out in common practice. If these views are well founded, they may be of use to others. It is for this reason, that I invite to them the attention of those, who feel an interest in this important branch of education.

We shall inquire, first, into the cause of the evil. Here, it might be remarked, that the orthography of the English language is difficult. This is a good reason why it should cost labor to learn it; but, it is not a good reason why the pupil should hammer upon it, so long, and know so little of it, at last. If the orthography of the English language were regular, like that of the Spanish or Latin, it would not need to be made a separate branch of study; it would be learned without. With a reasonable amount of well-directed labor, it may be learned as it is.

The instructor, who wishes for success in teaching this branch, should aim, not to make his pupils able to spell the greatest possible number of words, taken at random, but, to spell with the greatest possible correctness, when writing upon ordinary subjects. Bearing in mind this obvious principle, we shall perceive, that much will be gained, by causing the pupil to learn, first and most perfectly, those words which are of most frequent use, and which, consequently, the learner will be most likely to use in writing. We shall also see the advantage of confining his attention to the spelling of those words, whose meaning he either knows, already, or may be learning, at the time; for, to say nothing of the increased difficulty of retaining the orthography of a word whose meaning is unknown, what occasion is one likely to have, to spell a word which he does not know how to use? Let us now apply these principles to the common mode of teaching spelling.

Our language consists of something like seventy thousand words, the spelling of every one of which is to be learned, if learned at all, like its meaning and pronunciation, *by itself*. I do not think that there is a word in the whole vocabulary, whose spelling could be learned from its pronunciation, by any general principle. At the age of four or five years, the child is introduced to this herculean labor. At this time, he knows how to pronounce and use, in conversation, a very small fraction of this immense quantity of words. If he were now taught to spell those words, whose meaning he already knows, it would be an important benefit to him. It would complete his knowledge of that little stock of words, and place them entirely under his command. The spelling would be associated with the meaning and pronunciation, and would be easily retained. But, instead of this, he is introduced to a volume of words, which convey to his mind no more meaning than a volume of Greek. If, indeed, he should find a word of his acquaintance, in the long columns before him, he would not recognise it,

among so many strangers ; he is so unaccustomed to look for sense, that he does not heed it, where it is. This difficulty is not peculiar to the commencement of the study ; it follows the pupil to the end. If any one wishes to be convinced of this, let him open any common spelling-book, and I believe that he will find, that a very large proportion of the words are such as are not known, and scarcely need be known, to ordinary schoolboys, or ordinary men. There is a very large proportion of the words in our language, with whose meaning the mass of people cannot be expected to be acquainted ; and it is the height of folly, to drill children, perpetually, in spelling these words, while they neglect those in everyday use. This is just what is done, in the ordinary way of teaching spelling, and this is one strong reason why it is taught with so little success. We may then, I think, regard it as one cause of the evil of bad spelling, that *the lessons of the learner do not consist of such words as are in common use.*

But, our spelling books are, in other respects, ill-adapted to the end in view. Several classes of words undergo various modifications, such as those of tenses, numbers, cases, &c. Many words, also, are contracted by the omission of a letter or letters, and their place supplied by an apostrophe. Many of these variations can be learned in no other way so well as by practice in spelling them, as they occur. But, no adequate exercise of this sort is afforded by the books commonly used for spelling. Hence, so frequent errors in writing participles, plurals, possessives, &c.

I have one other fault to find with spelling-books ; it consists in the arrangement of the words. In these books, we commonly find the words which are alike, in some of their features, ranked together. Thus it often happens, that a word at the top of a column gives a clue to the spelling of all that stand under it, so that the pupil has only to learn to spell a small number of words, and recollect that all the rest are spelled in a similar way, and the lesson is done. This is a kind of labor-saving contrivance for the learner, and it might do very well, if he were to spell in columns, after leaving school. But, inasmuch as he is then to spell words as they come, it appears to me wise, to have him learn to do so, while in school. To illustrate my meaning, suppose a column of the spelling-book to begin with the word *weight*, and that this is followed by all the other words in the language containing the combination *eight*, with the sound of *a* long. The pupil glances over the column, and, in a moment, is ready to spell the whole. Now, let us suppose this boy to have occasion to use the word *freight*. If he has never learned the word by itself, but only in the column where it stood with its kindred, he will be most likely to fail in spelling it. If he should *happen* to remember which column it belonged in, he would spell it right ; but, if he should make a mistake, and assign it a place with the word *straight*, or *gait*, or *late*, he would spell it wrong. But, when the pupil has learned a word by itself, independently of its connections, he will know it anywhere, and he can use it when he pleases.*

To sum up our objections to the books commonly used in teaching orthography :—

1. They are made up of words beyond the reach of the learner, instead of those in everyday use.
2. They do not furnish adequate facilities for learning derivatives, contractions, &c.
3. Much of the arrangement, found in them, injures the real progress of

* We are sorry to differ, on any point, from an article, so excellent in the whole, as is this of our correspondent. But we cannot but think, that, after practising pupils on words with the meanings of which they are familiar, it would greatly facilitate the acquisition of the less common words, to have them arranged in columns, in the manner here objected to. Some of our reasons for this belief may be found on the 330th page of the 1st volume of this Journal, No. 21. See, also, the first article in No. 23, Vol. I, for our views on the art, or rather the *black-art*, of learning to spell.—E.D.

the learner, by furnishing aid which will leave him, when out of the spelling-book. I think these objections would, alone, furnish an answer to the question, why our people spell so badly.

I shall add but one more remark, upon this part of the subject. Pupils do not learn their lessons. Comparatively few teachers, I apprehend, require their pupils to learn well their lessons in spelling; or, if they do require it, they do not enforce the requirement. The class is paraded, daily, for a lesson, which some have not seen, others have looked over, but none have *learned*. They spell round, two or three times, getting some of the words right, but most of them wrong, and take their seats, to be called out, again, for a similar exercise, the next day. Thus they go on, from week to week, and from quarter to quarter, having a sort of vague expectation, no doubt, that they will, some time or other, know how to spell; but never dreaming, that they are to look for any marked progress, in any particular period of time. I do not say, that this is the way in which this business is always managed; but, that something, very much like it, very commonly prevails, will not be denied. But this will never do. If a pupil wishes to learn to spell, he must go about it, as he would to learn anything else; he must *learn something*, and learn it well, every day.

This must end our examination of the causes of bad spelling. They may, with propriety, be reduced to two—1. *Inappropriateness of the course of study*; and, 2. *The inefficient manner of pursuing it*. The remedy must consist in substituting a *better course of study*, and a *better manner of pursuing it*.

Our next inquiry will therefore be, What shall we substitute for spelling exercises, in the place of the spelling-books, definers, &c., which have been so long in use? Do not imagine, that I am going to give a recipe for making a new spelling-book. We have books enough, already, which are quite suitable for our purpose. Indeed, almost any book will do very well, except those which were *made* for spelling-books. Let the reading-book be also the spelling-book. Give the pupil a book to read in, which is suited to his capacity, and he will need no other for a spelling-book; he could not have a better. It is every way adapted to the purpose of teaching orthography. It will be seen, at once, to be free from the objections which have been mentioned as attaching to the books commonly used for this purpose. Unlike them, it is made up, mainly, of words of frequent occurrence; it furnishes continual exercise in spelling derivatives and contractions; and, finally, it teaches the pupil to spell words, not in columns and by machinery, but promiscuously, as he will have to do in practice.

There are some other important advantages of using the Reader for a spelling-book. Not only does such a book consist chiefly of such words as the pupil ought to study, but, those words, which have the strongest claims upon his attention, are perpetually recurring, and can scarcely fail to impress themselves indelibly upon his memory. As he goes on, he learns those words which are less and less common; and, if he should stop, before he has learned the whole, or the half, of the vocabulary, he will have the satisfaction to find, that he has learned just that part which he needs most. Not so with the spelling-book. There, if a common word does chance to be found, it occurs but once in the whole book. It is, therefore, but rarely seen, and when it is seen, it must share the pupil's attention with a multitude of unintelligibles. Is it strange, then, that he is unable to spell it, when an occasion presents for using it?

Another advantage of spelling from reading-books is, that it accustoms the learner to observing the orthography of words when reading, and thus puts him in the way of acquiring much of this branch, while engaged in all his different studies, and in miscellaneous reading.

I have noticed the principal advantages which recommend the Reader as a spelling-book. I believe that, if it were generally adopted, one of the

causes of the evil of bad spelling,—that of an inappropriate course of study,—would be effectually removed.

We found the other cause of this evil to be, that pupils do not learn their lessons well. The way to remove this cause is obvious ;—*See that they do learn them well.*

If, now, some one of the thousand teachers who have carried their pupils through and through the spelling-book, and yet find, that they cannot write a half-page, without disgracing themselves with the spelling, should ask my advice, I would say to him,—Cast aside the spelling-book, and assign your class a lesson in the Reader. It will be advantageous, on some accounts, to have the spelling and the reading lesson the same ; and, if the definitions are learned at the same time, from a dictionary, so much the better. The length of the lesson must depend on the previous attainments of the class ; but, whatever it be,—have it understood, that the lesson is given out, not to be spelled without being studied, nor to be *looked over* and spelled ; but, that it is to be *learned*,—wholly learned. When the class is paraded, passing over all those words which afford no chance for error, give to your pupils those words only, in which they are likely to find difficulty. Pronounce the words to them correctly, but never aid them, by pronouncing syllables separately ; and never allow a pupil to try a word more than once, unless he correct himself before he is informed of his error. At first, most likely, many of the pupils will fail. Let all who do so, whether more or less, stop and learn the lesson after school, unless you should conclude, that the lesson was longer than they could learn with a reasonable amount of study. In that case, excuse them, and give a shorter one for the next time. Follow up this plan, and be sure not to favor your scholars, out of kindness to yourself, lest you should be obliged to stay with them after school ; and,—I give my word for it,—your pupils will very soon find that a spelling lesson, like any other lesson, is a thing to be learned ; and, both you and they will find, to your gratification, before many months, that progress may be made in spelling, as well as in other studies ; and, it will be a progress that will show itself, not merely in the spelling exercises, but on all occasions which require the pupil to spell. He will be able to spell, when he writes.

I have recommended this way of teaching orthography, for the reasons which have appeared in the course of this article. I have only to add, in confirmation of what has been said, that I have tried the plan, for some years, with a success, which appears to me fully to justify the confidence with which I have supported and recommended it.

Here I might leave the subject. But, some one may inquire, why, in my investigation of the causes of bad spelling, I have taken no notice of the fact, that pupils in school spell, orally, while they must, in real practice, spell, in writing. I had not forgotten that this is commonly alleged as one cause, if not the main cause, why men find themselves more deficient in spelling, than they supposed themselves, when schoolboys. The reason why I did not notice it is, that I do not think it a matter of much importance, in connection with this subject. I believe it to be important, that the learner should be exercised in writing, in order that he may acquire a habit of accuracy in using the pen ; but it is not, in my opinion, important, as an exercise in spelling. One who is not accustomed to write, will be very likely to commit errors, when he attempts it ; but errors proceeding from this cause will not, properly speaking, be errors in spelling. He may spell words wrong, too ; but, so far as the cause in question is concerned, the error will be just as likely to fall upon the word *and*, as upon the most difficult word in the language. His errors will be simply *blunders* ; and, as such, will be readily corrected by himself, when his attention is called to them. I am persuaded, that the true cause of the difficulty has been given in its proper place.

C.

FAC SIMILE
of the
Handwriting and composition* of Laura Bridgman.

laura will write
letter to mother.
laura will ride with
father. laura
will make horse
for mother laura
will sleep with
mother and father
mother will love
and kiss laura. now
laura will eat.
letter for mother.
laura will go see uncle
laura will go home.

*Not the slightest correction or addition has been made, save inserting the punctuation.

LAURA BRIDGMAN,

THE DEAF, DUMB, AND BLIND, GIRL.

[We subjoin, from the Eighth Annual Report of the Trustees of the "Perkins Institution and Massachusetts Asylum for the Blind," some account of one of the most remarkable cases, on record, of what the human mind can accomplish, when bereft of its principal organs of sense. Here is a girl without the power of sight, of speech, of hearing, and with only a dim and obtuse perception of smell and taste,—a soul literally entombed in a body,—yet making acquaintance with the external world, and awakening her own inward power of thought and feeling, through the sense of touch alone.

If science and skill in a teacher can do so much to develop the powers of the mind, without the aid of the senses, what can not science and skill do, with their aid?

If a child, who is deprived of the senses, learns so much, and behaves so well, what ought those children to learn and to do, whom God has blessed with the means of knowledge and of doing good?—ED.]

There is one, whose situation is so peculiar, and whose case is so interesting, in a philosophical point of view, that we cannot forbear making particular mention of it; we allude to Laura Bridgman, the deaf, dumb, and blind, girl, mentioned in the two last Reports.

The intellectual improvement of this interesting being, and the progress she has made in expressing her ideas, is truly gratifying.

She uses the manual alphabet of the deaf mutes, with great facility, and great rapidity; she has increased her vocabulary, so as to comprehend the names of all common objects; she uses adjectives expressive of positive qualities, such as hard, soft, sweet, sour, &c.; verbs expressive of action, as give, take, ride, run, &c., in the present, past, and future, tense; she connects adjectives with nouns, to express their qualities; she introduces verbs into sentences, and connects them by conjunctions; for instance, a gentleman having given her an apple, she said, *man give Laura sweet apple*.

She can count to high numbers; she can add and subtract small numbers.

But the most gratifying acquirement which she has made, and the one which has given her the most delight, is the power of *writing a legible hand*, and expressing her thoughts upon paper. She writes with a pencil in a grooved line, and makes her letters clear and distinct.

She was sadly puzzled, at first, to know the meaning of the process, to which she was subjected; but, when the idea dawned upon her mind, that, by means of it, she could convey intelligence to her mother, her delight was unbounded. She applied herself with great diligence, and, in a few months, actually wrote a legible letter to her mother, in which she conveyed information of her being well, and of her coming home in ten weeks. It was, indeed, only the skeleton of a letter; but still, it expressed, in legible characters, a vague outline of the ideas, which were passing in her mind. She was very impatient to have *the man* carry this letter; for she supposed that the utmost limit of the Post Office Department, was to employ a man to run backward and forward, between our Institution and the different towns where the pupils live, to fetch and carry letters. We subjoin to this Report an exact *fac simile* of Laura's writing, observing, that she was not prompted to the matter, and that her hand was not held in the execution; the matter is quite original, and the chirography is entirely her own.—[A *fac-simile* accompanies this number.]

She has improved very much in personal appearance, as well as in intellect. Her countenance beams with intelligence; she is always active at study, work, or play; she never repines, and, most of the time, is gay and frolicsome.

She is now very expert with her needle, she knits very easily, and can make twine bags, and various fancy articles, very prettily. She is very docile, has a quick sense of propriety, dresses herself with great neatness, and is always correct in her deportment. In short, it would be difficult to find a child in the possession of all her senses, and the enjoyment of the advantages that wealth and parental love can bestow, who is more contented and cheerful, or to whom existence seems a greater blessing, than it does to this bereaved creature, for whom the sun has no light, the air no sound, and the flowers no color or smell.

* * * * *

The account given in the Report, of Laura Bridgman, though sufficiently minute for conveying an idea of her situation and acquirements, is not sufficiently so for those who regard her case as interesting and important, in a psychological point of view.

Such persons are assured, that careful observations continue to be made, with a view to ascertaining the order of developments, and the peculiar character of her intellectual fac-

ulties. The result will probably be made public. Meantime, the following general observations, added to those in the last Reports, will serve to make out a general, continuous history of the case.

Having mastered the manual alphabet of the deaf mutes, and learned to spell, readily, the names of every thing within her reach, she was then taught words expressive of positive qualities, as hardness, softness; and she readily learned to express the quality, by connecting the adjective hard or soft, with the substantive; though she generally followed what one would suppose to be the natural order, in the succession of ideas, placing the substantive first.

It was found too difficult, however, then, to make her understand any general expression of quality, as hardness, softness, in the abstract. Indeed, this is a process of mind most difficult of performance to any, especially to deaf mutes.

One of her earliest sentences, after learning the adjectives, was this; she had found the matron ill, and understood, that her head pained her; so she said, "*Smith head sick,—Laura sorry.*"

Next, she was put to the positive expression of relation to place, which she could understand. For instance, a ring was taken, and placed *on* a box, then the words were spelt to her, and she repeated them, from imitation. Then the ring was placed *on* a hat, and a sign given her to spell, she spelt, *ring on box*; but, being checked, and the right words given, she immediately began to exercise her judgment, and, as usual, seemed intently thinking. Then the same was repeated with a bag, a desk, and a great many other things, until, at last, she learned, that she must name the thing, *on* which the article was.

Then the same article was put *into* the box, and the words *ring in box* given her. This puzzled her for many minutes, and she would make mistakes; for instance, after she had learned to say correctly, whether the ring was *on* or *in* a box, a drawer, a hat, a bucket, &c., if she were asked, where is house, or matron, she would say, *in box*. Cross-questioning, however, is seldom necessary, to ascertain whether she really understands the force of the words she is learning; for, when the true meaning dawns upon her mind, the light spreads to her countenance.

In this case, the perception seemed instantaneous, and the natural sign, by which she expressed it, was peculiar and striking. She spelt *on*, then laid one hand *on* the other; then she spelt, *in to*, and enclosed one hand *within* the other.

Some idea of the difficulty of teaching her common expressions, or the meaning of them, may be found from the fact, that a lesson of two hours, upon the words *right* and *left*, was deemed very profitable, if she, in that time, really mastered the idea.

No definite course of instruction can be marked out; for her inquisitiveness is so great, that she is very much disconcerted, if any question which occurs to her is deferred, until the lesson is over. It is deemed best to gratify her, if her inquiry has any bearing on the lesson; and often, she leads her teacher far away from the objects he commenced with.

For instance, picking up a nail in one of her lessons, she instantly asked its name, and it being spelt, she was dissatisfied, and thought the teacher had made a mistake, for she knew *n a i l* stood for her finger nail, and she was very anxious to go to head-quarters, to be sure the teacher was right.

She often asks questions, which, unfortunately, cannot be satisfactorily answered to her, for it is painful to excite such a vivid curiosity as now exists in her mind, and then baulk it. For instance, she once asked, with much eagerness, why one arrangement of letters was not as good as another, to express the name of a thing; as why *t a c*, should not express the idea of the animal, as well as *c a t*. This she expressed, partly by signs, and partly by words, but her meaning was perfectly clear; she was puzzled, and wished an explanation.

An extract, from the diary kept by her instructor, will give an idea of her manner of questioning.

"December, 3.

"Spent one hour, in giving Laura an idea of the meaning of the words, *left* and *right*. She readily conceived that *left hand*, meant *her left hand*, but with difficulty generalized the term. At last, however, she caught the idea, and eagerly spelt the name of her arms, hands, fingers, feet, ears, &c., as they were touched, and named them, *right* or *left*, as might be; suddenly pausing, however, and looking puzzled, she put her finger on her *nose*, and asked, if that were *left* or *right*. Thus she continually puzzles one; but such is her eagerness to find out one's meaning, such a zealous coöperation is there on her part, that it is a delightful task to teach her.

"Uses, to-day, freely, the prepositions *in* and *on*: she says, teacher sitting *in* sofa:—do not dare to correct her, in such cases of anomalous usage of the preposition, but prefer to let her be in error, than shake her faith in a rule given. The corrections must be made, by and by; the sofa having sides, she naturally says *in*."

In her eagerness to advance her knowledge of words, and to communicate her ideas, she coins words, and is always guided by analogy. Sometimes, her process of word-making, is

very interesting. For instance, after some time spent in giving her an idea of the abstract meaning of *alone*, she seemed to obtain it, and to understand that being *by one's self* was to be alone, or *al-one*. She was told to go to her chamber, or school, or elsewhere, and return *alone*; she did so, but soon after, wishing to go with one of the little girls, she strove to express her meaning thus,—*Laura go al-two*.

The same eagerness is manifested, in her attempts to define, for the purpose of classification; for instance, some one giving her the word *bachelor*; she came to her teacher for a definition. She was taught that men, who had wives, were *husbands*, those, who had none, *bachelors*. When asked if she understood, she said “*man no have wife bachelor; Tenny bachelor;*” referring to an old friend of hers. Being told to define *bachelor*, she said, “*bachelor no have wife, and smoke pipe.*” Thus she considered the individual peculiarity of smoking, in one person, as a specific mark of the *species bachelor*.

Then in order to test her knowledge of the word, it was said by her teacher, Tenny has got no wife; what is Tenny?

She paused, and then said, “*Tenny is wrong!*”

The word *widow* being explained to her, a woman whose husband is dead, and she being called upon to define, she said, *widow is woman, man dead, and cold;* and eked out her meaning, by sinking down, and dropping her hand, to signify, *in the ground*.

The two last words she added herself, they not having been in the definition; but she instantly associates the idea of *coldness*, and *burial*, with death.

Her having acquired any idea of death was not by the wish of her teacher; it having been his intention to reserve the subject, until such a development of her reason should be attained, as would enable him to give a correct idea of it.

He hopes, still, by aid of the analogy of the germination and growth of plants, to give her a consoling hope of resurrection, to counterbalance the almost instinctive dread of death.

She had touched a dead body, before she came to the Institution.

She easily acquired a knowledge and use of active verbs, especially those expressive of *tangible action*; as to walk, to run, to sew, to shake.

At first, of course, no distinction could be made of mood and tense. She used the words in a general sense, and according to the order of her *sense of ideas*. Thus, in asking some one to give her bread, she would first use the word expressive of the leading idea, and say, “*Laura, bread, give.*” If she wanted water, she would say, “*water, drink, Laura.*”

Soon, however, she learned the use of the auxiliary verbs, of the difference of past, present, and future, tense; for instance, here is an early sentence, “*Keller is sick,—when will Keller well;*” the use of *be*, she had not acquired.

Having acquired the use of substantives, adjectives, verbs, prepositions, and conjunctions, it was deemed time to make the experiment of trying to teach her to *write*, and to show her, that she might communicate her ideas to persons, not in contact with her.

It was amusing, to witness the mute amazement with which she submitted to the process, the docility with which she imitated every motion, and the perseverance with which she moved her pencil, over and over again, in the same track, until she could form the letter. But when, at last, the idea dawned upon her, that, by this mysterious process, she could make other people understand what she thought, her joy was boundless.

Never did a child apply, more eagerly and joyfully, to any task, than she did to this; and, in a few months, she could make every letter distinctly, and separate words from each other.

The following anecdote will give an idea of her fondness for teasing, or innocent fun or mischief. Her teacher looking one day, unobserved, into the girls' playroom, saw three blind girls playing with the rockinghorse. Laura was on the crupper, another in the saddle, and a third clinging on the neck, and they were all in high glee, swinging backward and forward, as far as the rockers would roll. There was a peculiarly arch look, in Laura's countenance,—the natural language of sly fun. She seemed prepared to give a spring, and, suddenly, when her end was lowest, and the others were perched high in the air, she sidled quickly off onto the floor, and down went the other end, so swiftly as to throw the girls off the horse.

This Laura evidently expected; for she stood, a moment, convulsed with laughter, then ran eagerly forward, with outstretched hands, to find the girls, almost screaming with joy. As soon, however, as she got hold of one of them, she perceived that she was hurt; and, instantly her countenance changed, she seemed shocked and grieved, and, after caressing and comforting her playmate, she found the other, and seemed to apologize, by spelling the word, *wrong*, and caressing her.

When she can puzzle her teacher, she is pleased, and often purposely spells a word wrong, with a playful look; and, if she catch her teacher in a mistake, she bursts into an ecstasy of laughter.

When her teacher had been at work, giving her an idea of the words, carpenter, chair-maker, painter, &c., in a generic sense, and told her that blacksmiths made *nails*, she instantly held up her fingers, and asked if a blacksmith made them, though she knew well, he did not.

With little girls of her own age, she is full of frolic and fun ; and no one enjoys a game at romps, more than Laura.

She has the same fondness for a dress, for ribands, and for finery, as other girls of her age ; and as a proof, that it arises from the same amiable desire of pleasing others, it may be remarked, that, whenever she has a new bonnet, or any new article of dress, she is particularly desirous to go to meeting, or to go out with it. If people do not notice it, she directs their attention, by placing their hand upon it.

Generally, she indicates her preference for such visitors, as are the best dressed.

She is so much in company with blind persons, that she thinks blindness common, and when first meeting a person, she asks if they are blind, or she feels of their eyes.

She evidently knows that the blind differ from seeing persons, for, when she shows blind persons any thing, she always puts their fingers on it.

She seems to have a perception of character, and to have no esteem for those who have little intellect. The following anecdote is significant of her perception of character, and shews, that, from her friends, she requires something more than good-natured indulgence.

A new scholar entered school,—a little girl, about Laura's age. She was very helpless, and Laura took great pride and great pains in showing her the way about the house, assisting her to dress and undress, and doing for her many things, which she could not do herself.

In a few weeks, it began to be apparent, even to Laura, that the child was not only helpless, but naturally very stupid, being almost an idiot. Then Laura gave her up in despair, and avoided her ; and has ever since had an aversion to being with her, passing her by, as if in contempt. By a natural association of ideas, she attributes to this child all those countless deeds which Mr. *Nobody* does in every house. If a chair is broken, or any thing is misplaced, and no one knows who did it, Laura attributes it, at once, to this child.

It has been observed, before, that she is familiar with the processes of addition and subtraction in small numbers. Subtracting one number from another puzzled her for a time ; but, by help of objects, she accomplished it. She can count and conceive objects, to about one hundred in number ; to express an indefinitely great number, or more than she can count, she says *hundred*. If she thought a friend was to be absent many years, she would say,—will come *hundred Sundays* ; meaning weeks. She is pretty accurate in measuring time, and seems to have an intuitive tendency to do it. Unaided by the changes of night and day, by the light, or the sound of any timepiece, she, nevertheless, divides time, accurately.

With the days of the week, and the week itself, as a whole, she is perfectly familiar. For instance, if asked, what day will it be, in fifteen days more, she readily names the day of the week. The day she divides, by the commencement and end of school, by the recesses, and by the arrival of meal-times.

She goes to bed, punctually, at seven o'clock, and of her own accord. For some time after she came under our charge, she had some one to put her to bed, every night ; but soon it was thought best to send her alone, and that she might not wait for any one, she was left alone, one evening, and she sat until quite late, a person watching her ; and, at last, she seemed to form her resolution, suddenly ; she jumped up, and groped her way up to bed. From that time to this, she has never required to be told to go to bed ; but, at the arrival of the hour for retiring, she goes by herself.

Those persons, who hold that the capacity of perceiving and measuring the lapse of time, is an innate and distinct faculty of the mind, may deem it an important fact, that Laura evidently can measure time so accurately, as to distinguish between a half and a whole note of music.

Seated at the pianoforte, she will strike the notes, in a measure like the following, quite correctly.



Now, it will be perceived, that she must have a clear perception of lapse of time, in order to strike the two eighths at the right instant ; for, in the first measure, they occur at the second beat ; in the second measure, at the third beat.

There is no doubt, that practice will enable her to subdivide time still more, nay, minutely. Possibly, some attach an undue degree of importance to this power of measuring time, considered in a metaphysical point of view ; for any one may make the same experiment upon himself, and, by stopping his ears and closing his eyes, will find he can measure time, or the *duration of his sensation*, and know which of two periods is longest ; nevertheless, we shall continue carefully to note the phenomena in the case of Laura, for the benefit of whom they may concern.

It is interesting, in a physiological point of view, to know the effect of the deprivation of three senses upon the remaining two.

The sense of smell being destroyed, it seems a curious question, whether the effect upon the organ of taste is general or particular. That is, whether the taste is blunted, generally, and for all things alike, or whether one kind of sapidity is more affected than another. To ascertain this, some experiments have been tried; but, as yet, not enough to enable one to state, confidently, the results in minute distinction. The general conclusions are these.

Acids seem to make a vivid and distinct impression upon the taste, and she, apparently, distinguishes the different degrees of acidity, better than of sweetness or bitterness. She can distinguish between wine, cider, and vinegar, better than substances, like manna, liquorice, and sugar. Of bitters she seems to have less perception, or, indeed, hardly any; for on putting powdered rhubarb into her mouth, she called it *tea*, and on one saying *no*, and telling her to taste *close*, she evidently did try to taste it, but still called it *tea*, and spit it out; but without any contortion, or any indication of its being particularly disagreeable.

Of course, she has a repugnance to this kind of experiments, and it seems almost imposing upon her good nature, to push them very far; we shall, however, be soon able to ascertain, certainly, how far she can distinguish different sapid bodies. Those, who are curious in the physiology of the taste, know that the highest degree of *gusto*, or the acme of pleasure, is not obtained, until just as the morsel has slipped over the glottis, and is on its way, beyond power of recall, down the œsophagus. This seems to be a wise precaution of Nature, to prevent the stomach being cheated of its due; for, if the highest degree of pleasure in eating, could be obtained, without absolutely swallowing the morsel, the epicure could have an exhaustless source of pleasure, and need never degenerate into the *gourmand*.

Some physiologists, who have speculated upon this subject, consider that this final climax of the pleasure of taste, is produced by a fine aroma, which, rising from the morsel and mounting up the fauces, pleasantly titillates the ramifications of the olfactory nerve. The fact, that, when we have a cold in the head, and the fauces are obstructed, the taste is blunted, seems to bear out this supposition; but, from some observations on Laura, one would be inclined to think, that some other cause must contribute to the effect.

She appears to care less for the process of mastication than deglutition; and, probably, it is only the necessity of mechanical trituration of food, which induces her to go through with it, before hastening to the pleasant part of swallowing. Now, as the imperfection of smell impairs the taste in the tongue and palate, during mastication, it should have the same effect in deglutition, supposing this theory to be correct: but it seems not to be so; else Laura would have little inducement to swallow, save to fill a vacuity of stomach. Now, it seems doubtful, whether the feeling of vacuity of stomach, strictly speaking, would show a child the road for the food, or whether it would not be as likely to stuff bread into its ear, as into its mouth, if it had no pleasurable sensation in tasting; and further, if the pleasurable sensation did not increase and tempt to deglutition, it is doubtful, whether hunger or vacuity of stomach, *alone*, would teach a child to swallow the chewed morsel.

On the whole, she seems to care less for eating, than most children of her age.

With regard to the sense of touch, it is very acute, even for a blind person. It is shown remarkably, in the readiness with which she distinguishes persons. There are forty inmates in the female wing, with all of whom, of course, Laura is acquainted; whenever she is walking through the passage-ways, she perceives, by the jar of the floor, or the agitation of the air, that some one is near her, and it is exceedingly difficult to pass her without being recognised. Her little arms are stretched out, and the instant she grasps a hand, a sleeve, or even part of the dress, she knows, and lets the person pass on with some sign of recognition.

The innate desire for knowledge, and the instinctive efforts which the human faculties make, to exercise their functions, are shown most remarkably in Laura. Her tiny fingers are to her, as eyes, and ears, and nose, and most deftly and incessantly does she keep them in motion; like the feelers of some insects, which are continually agitated, and which touch every grain of sand, in the path, so Laura's arms and hands are continually in play; and when she is walking with a person, she not only recognises every thing she passes within touching distance, but, by continually touching her companion's hands, she ascertains what he is doing. A person, walking across a room while she had hold on his left arm, would find it hard to take a pencil out of his waistcoat-pocket, with his right hand, without her perceiving it.

Her judgment of distances, and of relations of place, is very accurate. She will rise from her seat, go straight towards a door, put out her hand, just at the right time, and grasp the handle with precision.

When she runs against a door, which is shut, but which she expected to find open, she does not fret, but rubs her head and laughs, as though she perceived the ludicrous position of a person flat against a door, trying to walk through it.

The constant and tireless exercise of her feelers gives her a very accurate knowledge of every thing about the house; so that, if a new article, a bundle, bandbox, or even a new book, is laid any where in the apartments which she frequents, it would be but a short time, before, in her ceaseless rounds, she would find it, and, from something about it, she would generally discover to whom it belonged.

She perceives the approach of persons by the undulations of the air striking her face ; and she can distinguish the step of those who tread hard, and jar the floor.

At table, if told to be still, she sits, and conducts herself with propriety ; handles her cup, spoon, and fork, like other children ; so that a stranger, looking at her, would take her for a very pretty child, with a green riband over her eyes.

But, when at liberty to do as she chooses, she is continually feeling of things, and ascertaining their size, shape, density, and use ; asking their names and their purposes, going on, with insatiable curiosity, step by step, towards knowledge.

Thus doth her active mind, though all silent and darkling within, commune, by means of her one sense, with things external, and gratify its innate craving for knowledge, by close and ceaseless attention.

Qualities and appearances, unappreciable or unheeded by others, are, to her, of great significance and value ; and by means of these, her knowledge of external nature and physical relations will, in time, become extensive.

If the same success shall attend the cultivation of her moral nature, as has followed that of her intellect and her perceptive faculties, great will be the reward to her, and most interesting will be the results to others.

CONVENTION OF TEACHERS.

At a meeting of Common School Teachers, from various parts of Worcester County, held, pursuant to previous notice, at the American Temperance House, in Worcester, on the 25th of January last, Thomas E. Valentine was appointed President, and O. B. Sawyer, Secretary.

The following resolutions were unanimously adopted :

Resolved, That the improvement of our District Schools is an object, which imperatively demands the immediate, increased attention and faithful efforts, at once of the teacher, the parent, and the Christian patriot.

Whereas, The influence of the Common School Teacher upon the rising generation, is second to that of no other individual in the community : Therefore,

Resolved, That every person, occupying that station, should be possessed of a good moral character.

Resolved, That it be recommended to all young men, who are engaged in the profession of teaching, to pursue that profession with firmness and interest ; to be guided by reason and prudence ; to be free and candid, when questioned by parents, guardians, or others, on the improvement of their pupils ; and not to fear giving them offence, if what they shall communicate is not always in accordance with their anticipations.

Resolved, That, in the choice and direction of studies, so far as these rest with the teacher, he should keep constantly in view, the best possible preparation of his scholars for the duties of practical life.

Resolved, That a journal, in which every important transaction in the school should be recorded, would essentially aid the teacher, in the duties of his profession.

Resolved, That we consider 'the Common School Journal,' edited by Hon. Horace Mann, a valuable publication, and well worthy of the patronage of every teacher, who desires a reform in our Common School system.

Resolved, That it be recommended to the several towns in this county, to authorize their school committees to furnish the schools with books, at the expense of the towns.

Resolved, That we deem the cause of Common School Education paramount to most of the other topics, which receive so much of the talent, energy, and pecuniary aid, of our citizens ; and that, as such, a deeper interest should be felt in it, by the entire community, and greater efforts made, to elevate Common Schools above the standard they now occupy.

Resolved, That the origin of the evils attending our Common Schools is not, principally, a want of skill or effort on the part of teachers, but a deficiency of interest on the part of the people ; and that this is manifested by their neglect to provide suitable places for instruction, and the requisite books, as well as by their delinquency in visiting the schools, to witness the progress of their children and wards ; by detaining them from their classes and the school, for trifling causes ; and by withholding from the teacher coöperation in his efforts, to preserve that order, which is indispensable to success.

Resolved, That, as in large schools, the younger pupils are neglected for the benefit of the older, we deem it expedient, they should be divided, and the younger placed under the care of female teachers.

In our next Number, we shall commence the publication of the Third Annual Report of the Board of Education, together with the Third Annual Report of the Secretary of the Board.

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